

Isaac Wright House  
431 East Zaragoza Street  
Pensacola  
Escambia County  
Florida

HABS No. FLA-200 HABS  
FLA

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## ISAAC WRIGHT HOUSE

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Location: 431 East Zaragoza Street, Pensacola, Escambia County, Florida. The house, on the west half of Lot 23, is located on the south side of the street, west of Florida Blanca Street.

Present Owner: Hershel Richards

Present Occupant: Unoccupied

Present Use: Vacant

Statement of Significance: This structure, typical of modest cottages built in Pensacola during the early nineteenth century, originally had a two room plan which has been extensively enlarged.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The ownership of the Lot 23 through the early decades of the nineteenth century is somewhat vague. Land Claims Records indicate that William Clark sold Lot 23 with a house for \$250 to Hermengilo Ruiz de Molino, Superintendant of the Royal Hospital, in 1782. Land Claims Book 4, page 119, states "John Lacosta, for the late Augustine Mauro, sold to Joquina Barola a house situated on Lot 23 having purchased place from Alonso Castillija, deceased by 27th November 1802." When Joaguina Barella filed his claim for Lot 23 with the Land Commission, he was listed as being the original grantee. Anna Walker claimed Lot 23 in July of 1810. Augustine Henrique, son of Pedro Henrique and Anna Walker, sued the executor of his father's estate for a share of the estate. Lot 23 was ordered sold at a public sale on September 3, 1817. Cayetano Garcia, the executor, sold the house and lot to James Fitzsimmons for \$620 which was divided between ten Henrique heirs. In 1818 Pensacola was under temporary civil government headed by Colonel William King, who ignored the Spanish deed to Lot 23 and gave the house and lot to William Patton. A court suit indicates that John Lee Williams appeared as an administrator for the heirs of J. H. Chapin in claiming the house and lot in 1823. It was registered on November 23, 1831, that William B. Patton

lost the property which was purchased by Aldon M. Jackson for \$1.20 at a tax sale.

Jackson sold the property to Joseph B. Browne for \$300 in 1837. Browne, a land speculator who lived in Key West and owned much property in Pensacola, sold Lot 23 to Francisco Moreno for \$50 in 1846. In 1878 Moreno sold the lot to Isaac Wright for \$1000. The deed recorded that Wright had been living on Lot 23 since 1874. Wright's widow sold the west half of the lot to Herman Pape in 1913. Pape deeded the property to Rudolph Ward in 1944, who sold it to Hershel Richards in 1946.

2. Date of erection: Since the property value of the lot was \$50 in 1846, it appears that an original house indicated as early as 1782 on Lot 23 may have disappeared. Therefore, the existing structure may have been built for Francisco Moreno, a Pensacola entrepreneur, after 1846 as a tenement. The 1878 deed recorded that Wright had been a tenant on Lot 23. Architecturally the house appears to have been built in the late 18th or early 19th century judging from its construction, style, and its proximity to the street.
3. Architect: Unknown
4. Original plans and construction information: None known
5. Alterations and additions: It appears that a rear, south apron porch has been enclosed and a rear wing, the width of the original structure, has been added at a later date.
6. Important old views: None known

B. Historic Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The Escambia County Court Files indicate that Anna Walker was ordered to leave the house on Lot 23 in which she had been living, which had been sold to James Fitzsimmons in 1817 and claimed by William Patton in 1818, and went to live with Alexander Crail. Crail stole a silver watch which had been given to Anna by a local jeweler. When Anna asked that the watch be returned, the jeweler denied having given it to her and had Crail arrested for selling stolen goods. Several months later Anna Walker was murdered. Crail tried to blame the murder on two Indian girls, but he was found guilty and was hung.

C. Sources of Information:

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1. Primary and unpublished sources: Records, Clerk of Courts Office, Escambia County Court House, Pensacola, Florida. 14-
2. Secondary and published sources: None known

Prepared by Rodd L. Wheaton  
Architect, HABS  
1972  
From Leora M. Sutton  
Research of March 22, 1970,  
Pensacola

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Description: This one-story, three-bay house began as a two room structure with inset front and rear porches. The rear porch has been enclosed and a rear wing, the width of the original structure, has been added. The fabric is in a neglected condition.
- B. Description of Exterior:
  1. Overall dimensions: The house measures 25'-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 48'-2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " which does not include a demolished rear appendage. The narrow dimension parallels the street.
  2. Foundations: Brick piers with deteriorated stucco support the structure. The piers are constructed from 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 4" x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", average dimension, bricks with  $\frac{1}{2}$ " joints. Supplementing the brick piers are trapezoidal wooden blocks. The chimney has a 4'-11" x 6'-8" brick foundation.
  3. Wall construction, finish and color: The wood frame is sheathed with  $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 5  $\frac{5}{8}$ " weatherboards approximately 5" to the weather. This siding is continuous at the rear wing and the side elevations of the original structure. 1" x 4" corner boards are used at the north corners. There is some modern novelty siding.
  4. Structural system: The braced wood frame, with mortise and tenon joints having wooden pin fasteners, has 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " square beams, 25'-0" long, and 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 7" x 14'-0" floor joists under the original two rooms of the structure which has 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 4" studs, 3'-6" on center (average), with diagonal bracing in the exterior walls. The 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 5  $\frac{3}{4}$ " attic floor joists are spaced 2'-0" on center. Modern 2 x 4 rafters are 2'-10" on center.

5. Porches: The inset porch of the north elevation is recessed under the gable roof. The ceiling is sheathed with random width, 5" to 6", boards which are painted white. 1 x 3 porch flooring is tongue and grooved. The existing rudimentary square porch columns are not original. Remnants of the original columns and railings exist. The foundation spacing, framing and flooring indicate that a similar porch was located at the south elevation of the original two room structure. Steps, which were recessed into the northwest corner of the front porch, are collapsed. A stoop at the south rear entrance is the floor structure of the demolished appendage.

6. Chimney: A brick chimney is located at the west gable end of the structure. The 4'-11" x 6'-0" chimney breast tapers above the projecting firebox to a 1'-5½" x 1'-9 3/4" stack. Two corbelled courses at the top form a cap. The chimney has remnants of stucco. On either side of the stack a 7/8" x 2½" board is notched over the siding which abutts the brick work.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The simple 1" x 4" trim, without beading, of the front door is flush with the weatherboarding and has fragments of red-brown paint. A modern glazed and paneled door and a modern screen door are hung within the frame.

b. Windows and shutters: The two front windows which flank the doorway have nine-over-six light sash. Six-over-six light fill the original side window openings. The sash has thin muntins, old glass and are hung in frames with 1" x 4" trim boards and 2" thick sills. Sections of hinges indicate that there were pairs of shutters or blinds at each opening. The attic window of the east gable has been closed with sheet metal. Side windows of the enclosed south porch have four vertical lights over a single light. Two-over-two light sash and miscellaneous sash fill the window openings of the rear wing.

8. Roof:

a. Shape and covering: The gable roof of the original structure, with its ridge parallelling the street, is covered with corrugated sheet metal over wood shingles. The gable roof of the wing is perpendicular to the main roof and has sheet metal over wood shingles.

- b. Cornice and eaves: The front eave is boxed. A barge board extends up the rakes of the original structure. The eaves of the rear wing are characterized by exposed rafter ends.
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C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The entrance from the north, front porch opens into the larger of the original two rooms, which open into two similar sized rooms, formerly part of the south porch. The larger of the central rooms opens into a large room in the wing which has two smaller east rooms, the corner one of which is glazed around the exterior walls. The rear rooms open onto a stoop, the floor of the demolished appendage. There is an attic space over the mainstructure with a hatchway in the ceiling of the former south porch area.
2. Stairways: None
3. Flooring: There is a variety of pine flooring with modern coverings over earlier random width, tongue and groove boards. A change in the flooring material in the central rooms indicates the edge of the original porch.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The interior partition between the north rooms is constructed from vertical  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " thick, random width tongue and groove boards. Flush boarding, 6" to 9", is nailed directly to the studding. The chimney breast is plastered. The interiors are painted white, beige, red, green and/or blue. There is deteriorated wall paper and fiber-gypsum board covering much of the original finish. The ceilings are sheathed in flush, random width boards, though the ceiling of the northwest room has beaded, tongue and groove boarding.
5. Doorways and doors: There are miscellaneous panel and board and batten doors which all have wood thresholds. One interior, 1" thick door, which is in good condition, is of mortise and tenon, stile and rail construction with four panels.
6. Decorative features: None of significance
7. Notable hardware: None of significance
8. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Lighting: None of significance
  - b. Heating: The fireplace has a strap iron lintel over

the firebox which is lined with cement wash. A modern mantelpiece is set onto the plaster fascia of the chimney breast which has a concrete hearth.

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- D. Site and Surroundings: The structure faces north on East Zaragoza Street at the property line. There are no sidewalks. Remnants of a macadam driveway survive at the east side of the house. A wood frame, one-car garage is located near the southeast corner of the structure.

Prepared by F. Blair Reeves, AIA  
HABS--Pensacola  
July 10, 1968

### PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project, sponsored by the Pensacola Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, now known as the Historic Pensacola Preservation Board of Trustees, in cooperation with the Historic American Buildings Survey, was recorded during the summer of 1968 in Pensacola under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS; Professor F. Blair Reeves, AIA (University of Florida), Project Supervisor; and Student Assistant Architects John O. Crosby (University of Florida), David L. Van de Ven, Jr. (Texas Technological College), and Edward Bondi, Jr. (University of Florida). The historical information was prepared by Professor Samuel Proctor (University of Florida), by Assistant Historian Linda V. Ellsworth (Historic Pensacola Preservation Board), and by Rodd L. Wheaton (Architect, HABS) who edited all the data in 1972.